

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 RABAT 04270 061655Z

71

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ARA-06 EA-07 ACDA-07 /110 W

----- 034622

R 061555Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9406

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 4270

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MO, AG, SS

SUBJECT: GOM TACTICS ON SAHARA ON EVE OF COLOMBO

1. SUMMARY. GOM DISCLOSING VERY LITTLE OF ITS GAME PLAN ON SAHARA GOING INTO COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE (NAC). ITS RECENT CALL FOR ARAB LEAGUE INVOLVEMENT SEEMS DESIGNED SUPPORT GOAL OF SIDETRACKING QUESTION AT COLOMBO WHILE SHIFTING FOCUS FROM PENDING OAU EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT, TOWARD WHICH GOM DECIDEDLY COOL. SUCCESS THESE TACTICS SEEMS PROBLEMATIC. WE DO NOT VIEW HARSH LANGUAGE IN GOM MESSAGE TO ARAB LEAGUE AS SIGNALLING ANY INTENTION TO INITIATE HOSTILITIES. END SUMMARY.

2. EXTRAORDINARY OAU SUMMIT. GOM PUBLIC COMMENTARY ON
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 RABAT 04270 061655Z

SAHARA HAS BEEN CAREFULLY MUTED SINCE PORT LOUIS. MAJOR

ATTEMPT HAS BEEN MADE HERE TO PORTRAY MOROCCO'S DISPUTE WITH ALGERIA AS BILATERAL ISSUE RATHER THAN AS QUESTION OF WHAT'S RIGHT FOR THE SAHARA. TEXT OF PORT LOUIS RESOLUTION CALLING FOR EXTRAORDINARY OAU SUMMIT ON SAHARA HAS NEVER EVEN BEEN PUBLISHED HERE IN EITHER SEMI-OFFICIAL OR OPPOSITION PRESS. IN ONLY PUBLIC STATEMENT TO DATE ON EXTRAORDINARY SUMMIT, FONMIN LARAKI TOLD AFP JULY 15 (RABAT 3850) THAT GOM WOULD "NEVER" ACCEPT RE-OPENING DISCUSSION ON SAHARA. WE HAVE HAD REPEATED INDICATIONS IN OUR PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH MFA OFFICIALS THAT MOROCCO'S STRATEGY HAS BEEN TO AVOID EXPLICITLY REJECTING EVENTUAL SUMMIT, WHILE EFFECTIVELY PREVENTING ITS TAKING PLACE. FACT IS THAT ALGERIA'S ABILITY TO MUSTER MAJORITY IN OAU PLUS PROBLEMATIC REFERENCES IN PORT LOUIS RESOLUTION TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND SAHARAN PEOPLES ARE FACTORS WHICH LEAVE GOM VERY COOL ON THAT VENUE.

3. CHIEF OF AFRICA-ASIA DIVISION IN MFA TOLD EMBOFF AUGUST 5 THAT "WORST" THING WHICH COULD HAPPEN AT COLOMBO WOULD BE RESOLUTION CITING PENDING EXTRAORDINARY OAU CONFERENCE, FOR IT "QUESTIONABLE" WHETHER THAT CONFERENCE WOULD EVER TAKE PLACE. HE SAID SIR LANKANS HAD ANNOUNCED THAT NAC WOULD NOT DEAL WITH BILATERAL QUESTIONS, AND PROBLEM IN THIS AREA WAS CLEARLY OF BILATERAL NATURE, NOT QUESTION OF SAHARAN SOVEREIGNTY, SELF-DETERMINATION, OR ANY SUCH THING.

4. GOM CALLS FOR ARAB LEAGUE INVOLVEMENT. GOM REVEALED AUG 4 THAT IT HAD CALLED ON ARAB LEAGUE TO STEP INTO BREACH TO DEAL WITH "AREA TENSIONS". FONMIN LARAKI SENT MESSAGE TO ARAB LEAGUE SECGEN JULY 31 ACCUSING ALGERIA OF VIOLATING COMMITMENTS ALLEGEDLY UNDERTAKEN AT 1974 RABAT ARAB SUMMIT. MESSAGE TWICE IMPORED ARABS TO HEAD OFF INTER-ARAB WAR WHEN ENERGIES NEEDED AGAINST ISRAEL/ZIONISM. LARAKI ECHOED KING'S JULY 8 SPEECH THEME THAT MOROCCAN PATIENCE AT AN END AND THAT IT ONLY DUE TO THAT PATIENCE AND REASON THAT WAR HAD NOT ALREADY BROKEN OUT. MESSAGE THEN CALLED UPON SECGEN TO SUBMIT SUBJECT OF AREA TENSIONS TO ARAB STATES TO SEEK SOLUTION TO SITUATION, WHICH IT CHARACTERIZED AS "SLIPPING TOWARD SERIOUS PRECIPICE."
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 RABAT 04270 061655Z

5. SAHARA AT COLOMBO. WITH NEW CALL TO ARAB LEAGUE, WHERE GOM FEELS IT HAS ADVANTAGE IN SUPPORTERS, STAGE NOW SEEMS SET FOR IT TO ARGUE AT COLOMBO THAT DISPUTE IS BILATERAL, AND THAT AS SUCH, IT SHOULD BE DEALT WITH BY REGIONAL ORGANIZATION (I.E. ARAB LEAGUE), WHICH HAS NOW BEEN SEIZED WITH QUESTION. IN OUR PRIVATE TALKS HERE, MFA OFFICIALS HAVE REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED CONFIDENT VIEW THAT

"RESPONSIBLE" COUNTRIES AT NAC SUCH AS INDONESIA, IRAQ, YUGOSLAVIA, INDIA AND SAUDI ARABIA WOULD WISH TO KEEP DOWN CONTENTION WHICH DISCUSSION OF SAHARA WOULD INTRODUCE. YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR HERE HAS BEEN SPREADING WORD THAT TITO WANTED VERY MUCH TO AVOID SEEING SAHARA INTRODUCED AT NAC, WHICH HE REPORTEDLY FELT WAS LOSING ITS FOCUS. GOM APPARENTLY ATTEMPTING TO EXPLOIT THIS SENTIMENT, FOR KING HAS SENT MININFO BENHIMA TO BELGRADE WITH PERSONAL MESSAGE TO TITO. WHETHER GOM OUTWARD OPTIMISM JUSTIFIED-- OR IN FACT WHETHER IT EVEN BELIEVED-- IS QUESTIONABLE. TUNISIAN CHARGE, NOTING THAT ALGERIANS EXPECTED TO MAKE ANOTHER MAJOR EFFORT AT COLOMBO, AND THAT BOUMEDIENE EXPECTED TO ATTEND CONFERENCE, PREDICTED TO EMBOFF AUG 5 THAT GOM WOULD SUFFER ANOTHER SETBACK. EGYPTIAN DCM ALSO EXPRESSED THIS VIEW IN AUG 6 CONVERSATION.

6. INSIDE SAHARA. MEANWHILE, IN SAHARA ITSELF MILITARY ACTIVITY GOES ON, WITH CONTINUING HARASSING ACTIONS BY POLISARIO REPORTED. BOTH SPANISH AND TUNISIAN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES CLAIMED TO HAVE INFORMATION SUPPORTING REPORTS THAT ONE LARGE ACTION HAD OCCURRED RECENTLY NEAR BIR MOGHREIN, IN NORTHERN MAURITANIA (ALGIERS 1929--NOTAL). ON THE OTHER HAND, DISTINGUISHED WESTERN NEWSMAN JUST BACK FROM SAHARA REPORTED HIS IMPRESSION THAT LOCAL SITUATION "VERY CALM", AND THAT POPULATION AND MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS IN AT LEAST EL AYOUN AND SMARA REFLECTED THAT CALM. OFFICIALS ACKNOWLEDGED ONGOING CLASHES (INCLUDING JULY 4 INCIDENT AT TANTAN--SEE RABAT 3864), BUT IMPRESSED JOURNALIST WITH THEIR CONFIDENCE AT ABILITY TO HANDLE SITUATION. LOCAL OFFICIALS, HE REPORTED, PROCEEDING ON ASSUMPTION THAT ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD IN SAHARA (SEE RABAT 3850).

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 RABAT 04270 061655Z

7. COMMENT: GOM FALLBACK POSITION FOR COLOMBO UNCLEAR, AND NO TALK OF WALKOUT HAS BEEN HEARD HERE TO DATE, UNLIKE PRE-PORT LOUIS PERIOD. THAT POSSIBILITY SHOULD NOT BE EXCLUDED, HOWEVER, IF THINGS GO BADLY FOR GOM, AS WELL THEY MIGHT.

8. WHILE TONE OF GOM NOTE TO ARAB LEAGUE IS HARSH, IN BALANCE WE JUDGE THAT THAT HARSHNESS IS MORE DESIGNED TO IMPRESS ARAB FRIENDS AND OTHER ONLOOKERS THAN TO SIGNAL THREAT OF IMMINENT HOSTILITIES. AS WE HAVE CONCLUDED ELSEWHERE, WE SEE NO SIGN THAT GOM IS PREPARING TO INITIATE HOSTILITIES.

ANDERSON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, NONALIGNED NATIONS MEETINGS, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976RABAT04270
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760304-0591
From: RABAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760877/aaaacpaa.tel
Line Count: 168
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <07 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOM TACTICS ON SAHARA ON EVE OF COLOMBO
TAGS: PFOR, MO, AG, SS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006